

Birds of Ngwazi, Mufindi District, Tanzania

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The writing of this paper was prompted by our observations of birds in late May 1989 at Lake Ngwazi and nearby habitats. Ngwazi Estate and Ngwazi Lake (8°31'S, 35°10'E) are in the southern highlands of Tanzania, Iringa Region, Mufindi District, at an altitude of 1830 m. Mufindi District occupies the southernmost area of the Uzungwa mountains. Past ornithological exploration of the Uzungwas has concentrated primarily on the dry scrubby forest of the plateau (Bangs & Loveridge 1933, Lynes 1934, and Ripley & Heinrich 1966, 1969). Only recently have ornithologists (Stuart *et al.* 1981, Stuart & Jensen 1981) visited the wet forests on the eastern scarp. This is the richest area in endemic bird species in the Tanganyika–Nyasa montane forest island group as defined by Moreau (1966). Uzungwa is Tanzania's largest montane area (c. 10 000 km²), with peaks rising to 2800 m (Rodgers & Homewood 1982). The southern and eastern slopes facing the Indian Ocean receive the most precipitation and support rainforest with a canopy reaching 40 m in some areas (Lovett *et al.* 1988). The remaining plateau country and slopes to the north and west are drier and support extensive grassland, *Brachystegia* woodland, and occasional patches of scrubby dry forest (Stuart *et al.* 1981). Because most ornithological work in the Uzungwas has focused on forest birds, little emphasis has been placed on species of woodland and other habitats. The purpose of this paper, then, is to list some of the non-forest and forest edge bird species found on the Uzungwa Plateau and to document range extensions.

Study Site

The mean rainfall at Ngwazi is 800 mm yr⁻¹ and mean temperatures range from 17–18°C in November to March, dropping to 13.5°C in June and July with occasional frosts. Lake Ngwazi, 4.5 km² in area, was formed by Ngwazi dam built in 1953. The water is clear and cold with a fringe of reeds along the shoreline. The stunted Miombo woodland at Ngwazi is rather depauperate in bird and plant species. A majority of bird species found here are generalists that also occur in other habitats and altitude ranges. There are also several forest-edge and thicket-dwelling bird species found at Ngwazi in patches of evergreen forest growing on termite mounds in the woodland and in riverine forest along a small stream at the outlet of Lake Ngwazi. A majority of the area of Ngwazi Estate is under cultivation or exotic plantations. The pine plantations there support few species of birds or other animals. Bushbuck *Tregalephus scriptus*, Black-faced Vervet *Cercopithecus aethiopicus*, as well as several bird species, Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* (on migration), African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*, Dusky Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens*, and others are found in the pines. The situation is the same for Eucalyptus plantations except where indigenous vegetation has regenerated in the undergrowth or where invading Black Wattle has formed a nearly impenetrable understory.

Most bird species recorded from these exotic habitats are associated with edges and firebreaks where grassland and a few indigenous tree species can be found. Black Wattle plantations at Ngwazi have not been maintained for a number of years. Fallen trees and dense stands of young trees form a thick tangle in which a number of forest and forest-edge bird species are found. In addition, many small groves and patches of wattle have invaded areas of the grassland and lake shore and are important habitat there for species such as White-browed Robin Chat *Cossypha heuglini*, Brown-headed Apalis *Apalis alticola*, and Tropical Boubou, *Laniarius ferrugineus*.

Vegetation

The soil at Ngwazi, mostly infertile clay with stones, supports extensive montane grassland, plantations of Black Wattle *Acacia mearnsi*, Blue Gum *Eucalyptus grandis*, several species of pine *Pinus* spp., Tea *Camellia sinensis*, and Maize *Zea mays*. In addition, there is a small area of stunted Zambesian woodland with some Afromontane elements on the termite mounds and in the riverine forest (phytogeographic terminology following White (1983)). The stunted woodland has a canopy of 2–4 m and is dominated by *Brachystegia spiciformis*. Other woody plants include: *Bersama abyssinica*, *Brachystegia boehmii*, *Dioscorea quartiniana*, *Kotschya* spp., *Osyris lanceolata*, *Parinari curatellifolia*, *Pavetta johnstonii* *breviloba*, *Psorospermum febrifugum*, and *Uapaca kirkiana*. Herbaceous plants found in the woodland include: *Aeollanthus subacaulis*, *Carex nyasensis*, *Cyperus diffusus sylvestris*, *Cyperus distans*, *Cyperus obtusiflorus*, *Digitaria gasensis*, *Disa robusta*, *Eragrostis schweinfurthii*, *Fadogia elskensii*, *Fadogia triphylla*, *Ipomoea obscura*, *Justicia diclipteroides*, *Justicia nuttii*, *Kyllinga alba*, *Kyllingiella micricephala*, *Loudentia simplex*, *Multidentia concrescens*, *Otiophora caerulea*, *Psychotria spithamen*, *Rhychelytrus merviglume*, *Satyrium volkensii*, *Setaria orthosticha*, *Setaria sphacelata*, *Spermacoce dibrachiata*, and *Trachypogon spicatus*. The evergreen forest on termite mounds within the woodland and on the surrounding grassland has a canopy of 4–8 m (Lovett & Gereau, in press); woody plants found here include: *Apodytes dimidiata*, *Brysocarpus orientalis*, *Carissa edulis*, *Croton macrostachyus*, *Cussonia arborea*, *Dombeya rotundifolia*, *Erythrina abyssinica*, *Flacourtia indica*, *Grewia stoltzii*, *Jasminus goetzeanus*, *Keetia gueinzii*, *Olinia rochetiana*, *Phytolacca dodecandra*, *Prunus africana*, *Rhiocissus tridentata*, *Rhus longipes*, *Rothmannia fischeri* and *Toddalia asiatica*. The riverine forest is dominated by *Syzigium cordatum* with a canopy height of 8–10 m; other woody plants found here include: *Albizia gummifera*, *Apodytes dimidiata*, *Maesa lanceolata*, *Psychotia mahonii*, and *Vepris stoltzii*.

Species Accounts

The following annotated list includes records such as range extensions and additions to the Mufindi District checklist (Boswell & Beakbane, unpubl. data). Most of these species were seen at Ngwazi between 22 and 25 May 1989, observations included from other localities are indicated in the text. A more complete list of species observed at Ngwazi from 1987–1989 is given in Appendix A. This list is not exhaustive and many more species will, no doubt, be added with further field work. Names are those of Britton (1980).

Red-necked Francolin *Francolinus afer*

Two birds were seen in the grassland near the airfield at 1850 m and others were heard calling daily. Britton (1980) gave 1500 m as the upper altitude limit for this species; however, it regularly occurs up to 2000 m on the Ufipa Plateau (8°–9°S, 31°–32°E) to the west, and Baker (1981) found it at 2450 m on Mbeya Mountain (8°50S, 31°22E).

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*

One bird was heard in tall, marshy grass along a stream 40 km southeast of Ngwazi at 1460 m on the road from Sawala to Lulanda (8°36S, 35°34E). This is the first reported record for Mufindi District.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcopilos*

Two birds were seen and heard daily in the woodland near the northern end of Lake

Ngwazi at 1830 m. Britton (1980) gave 1600 m as the upper altitude limit for this species.

Mackinder's Eagle-Owl *Bubo capensis makinderi*

A female was found dead 15 km east of Lake Ngwazi on the road from Ngwazi to Sawala (8°30S, 35°18E). This record extends the known range of this species in Tanzania 100 km to the south.

Spot-throat *Modulatrix stictigula*

A single bird was heard in thick understory in a forest patch on Lugoda Estate (8°34S, 35°16E), 15 km east of Ngwazi at 2000 m altitude. Britton (1980) gave the upper altitude limit as 1800 m.

Grey Wren Warbler *Camaroptera simplex*

At least one bird was seen and heard daily in mixed-species flocks in the woodland at 1830 m. This species was not listed on the Mufindi District checklist; however, Britton (1980) gave a record from Sao Hill (8°20S, 35°12E) 11 km north of Ngwazi so it has been recorded there. The upper altitude limit given by Britton (1980) is 1700 m; this must have been an oversight, however, as Sao Hill is 1880 m.

Churring Cisticola *Cisticola njombe*

This species is common at Ngwazi at 1830 m and was observed near bushes and clumps of evergreen vegetation on termite mounds in the grassland. Britton (1980) gave the lower altitude limit for this species as 2000 m.

Fan-tailed Warbler *Schoenicola platyura*

One bird was heard in rank grass along the shore of Lake Ngwazi. This is the first record of this species for Mufindi District.

Miombo Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia manoensis*

A total of six birds was seen in mixed-species flocks in the woodland at Ngwazi gleaning insects from leaf surfaces. This record represents a considerable altitudinal range extension from the 1400 m upper limit given by Britton (1980). At Lugoda Estate (8°34S, 35°16E), 15 km to the east and 150 m higher, the Eastern Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia mediocris* is the common sunbird in gardens, forest edge, and wattle.

Stripe-breasted Seed-eater *Serinus reichardi*

Small flocks of three to five individuals were seen daily in the woodland at Ngwazi at 1830 m. Britton (1980) gave the upper altitude limit for this species as 1500 m.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology for providing assistance and permission to conduct research in Tanzania and to the New York Zoological Society, the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund, Mr J. S. McIlhenny, and the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania for financial support. We also thank Brooke Bond Tanzania Ltd for permission to work on Ngwazi Estate, Mr T. C. E. Congdon for accommodation and good company, and J. V. Remsen for many useful comments and helpful criticism of this paper.

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	EF	RF	BW	MG	OW	LS	AF	FO	EP
Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>				•				•	•
Eastern Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco amurensis</i>							•	•	
Eleonora's Falcon <i>Falco eleonorae</i>								•	•
Hobby <i>Falco subbuteo</i>				•				•	•
Red-necked Spurfowl <i>Froncolinus afer</i>		•	•					•	
Purple Gallinule <i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>					•				
Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>					•				
Red-knobbed Coot <i>Fulica cristata</i>					•				
Jacana <i>Actophilornis africanus</i>					•				
Lesser Jacana <i>Microparra capensis</i>					•				
Temminck's Courser <i>Cursorius temminckii</i>				•					
Wattled Plover <i>Vanellus senegallus</i>				•					
Crowned Plover <i>Vanellus coronatus</i>				•					
Long-toed Plover <i>Vanellus crassirostris</i>					•				
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove <i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>		•	•						
Red-eyed Dove <i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>			•						•
Ring-necked Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>			•						
Dusky Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia lugens</i>	•		•						•
Black and White Cuckoo <i>Clamator jacobinus</i>			•						
Red-chested Cuckoo <i>Cuculus solitarius</i>									•
Klaas's Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	•	•	•						
White-browed Coucal <i>Centropus superciliosus</i>						•			
Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>			•						
Common Swift <i>Apus apus</i>							•	•	
Speckled Mousebird <i>Colius striatus</i>	•	•	•						
Malachite Kingfisher <i>Alcedo cristata</i>		•			•				
Little Bee-eater <i>Merops pusillus</i>			•	•		•			
Eurasian Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>									•
Eurasian Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i>									•
Lesser Honeyguide <i>Indicator minor</i>	•	•	•						
Scaly-throated Honeyguide <i>Indicator variegatus</i>			•						
Cardinal Woodpecker <i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	•	•	•						
Red-capped Lark <i>Calandrella cinerea</i>				•					
Flappet Lark <i>Mirafra rufocinnamomea</i>				•					
Angola Swallow <i>Hirundo angolensis</i>				•		•	•		
Blue Swallow <i>Hirundo atrocaerulea</i>				•					•
Grey-rumped Swallow <i>Hirundo griseopyga</i>				•		•	•		
Eurasian Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>				•		•	•		
Black Rough-wing <i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>									•
Banded Martin <i>Riparia cincta</i>				•		•	•		
African Sand Martin <i>Riparia paludicola</i>									•
African Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus auratus</i>	•	•	•						
Black-headed Oriole <i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	•	•	•						
Pied Crow <i>Corvus albus</i>			•	•					•
Black Tit <i>Parus leucomelas</i>	•	•	•						
Black Cuckoo Shrike <i>Campephaga flava</i>	•	•	•						

	EF	RF	BW	MG	OW	LS	AF	FO	EP
Common Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	•	•	•						
White-browed Scrub Robin <i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>		•		•					
White-browed Robin Chat <i>Cossypha heuglini</i>	•	•							•
Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>				•		•			
Kurrichane Thrush <i>Turdus libonyanus</i>			•						
Brown-headed Apalis <i>Apalis alticola</i>	•	•							•
Grey-backed Camaroptera <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	•	•							•
Wing-snapping Cisticola <i>Cisticola ayresii</i>				•					
Singing Cisticola <i>Cisticola cantans</i>						•			
Black-lored Cisticola <i>Cisticola chubbi nigriloris</i>				•					
Croaking Cisticola <i>Cisticola natalensis</i>			•	•					
Churring Cisticola <i>Cisticola njombe</i>				•					
Trilling Cisticola <i>Cisticola woosnami</i>			•						
Tawny-flanked Prinia <i>Prinia subflava</i>			•	•		•			
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>									•
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	•	•	•						
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	•	•	•						
Whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i>	•	•	•						
Red-faced Crombec <i>Sylvietta whytii</i>	•	•	•						
Pale Flycatcher <i>Bradornis pallidus</i>			•						
White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis chocolatina</i>	•	•	•						
Southern Black Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>				•					
Dusky Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	•	•	•						
Lead-coloured Flycatcher <i>Myoparus plumbeus</i>			•						
Chin-spot Batis <i>Batis molitor</i>			•						
Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	•	•	•						
Richard's Pipit <i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>				•					
Long-billed Pipit <i>Anthus similis</i>				•					
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>									•
Fülleborn's Longclaw <i>Macronyx fuelleborni</i>				•					
African Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla aguimp</i>						•			
Black-backed Puffback <i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	•	•	•						
Tropical Boubou <i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	•	•							•
Brown-headed Tchagra <i>Tchagra australis</i>	•		•						
Black-headed Tchagra <i>Tchagra senegala</i>			•						
Fiscal <i>Lanius collaris</i>			•	•					
Blue-eared Glossy Starling <i>Lamprotornis chalybaeus</i>	•	•	•						
Collared Sunbird <i>Anthreptes collaris</i>	•	•							
Variable Sunbird <i>Nectarinia venusta</i>	•	•	•	•					
Green-headed Sunbird <i>Nectarinia verticalis</i>	•	•	•						
Yellow White-eye <i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>	•	•	•						
Grosbeak Weaver <i>Amyblopiza albifrons</i>		•							
Red-headed Weaver <i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>			•						
Red-naped Widowbird <i>Euplectes ardens</i>			•	•		•			
Fan-tailed Widowbird <i>Euplectes axillaris</i>				•					
Yellow Bishop <i>Euplectes capensis</i>			•	•		•			

	EF	RF	BW	MG	OW	LS	AF	FO	EP
Marsh Widowbird <i>Euplectes hartlaubi</i>						•			
Baglafaecht Weaver <i>Ploceus baglafaecht</i>	•	•	•			•			
Spectacled Weaver <i>Ploceus ocularis</i>		•				•			
Holub's Golden Weaver <i>Ploceus xanthops</i>	•	•	•			•			
Southern Brown-throated Weaver <i>Ploceus xanthopterus</i>						•			
Cardinal Quelea <i>Quelea cardinalis</i>						•			
Pin-tailed Whydah <i>Vidua macroura</i>			•	•					
African Firefinch Indigobird <i>Hypochera funerea</i>					•				
Waxbill <i>Estrilda astrild</i>			•	•		•			
Yellow-bellied Waxbill <i>Estrilda melanotis</i>						•			
Fawn-breasted Waxbill <i>Estrilda paludicola</i>			•			•			
African Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	•	•	•	•					
Bronze Mannikin <i>Lonchura cucullata</i>			•	•		•			
Cabanis' Bunting <i>Emberiza cabanisi</i>			•						
Golden-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>			•						
African Citril <i>Serinus citrinelloides</i>	•	•	•	•					
Yellow-fronted Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>	•	•	•						
Brimstone Canary <i>Serinus sulphuratus</i>	•	•	•	•					



First notice

Eighth Pan-African Ornithological Congress

Hôtel Méridien Umubano,
Kigali, Rwanda, 4-9 October 1992

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